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points to scratch your hands and the birds. These are rigid and strong, and if they are bent out of shape they can easily be straightened.

The flat traps proved themselves the most successful in the trapping of 2678 birds at Waukegan last year.

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## FIELD NOTES

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### A SEPTEMBER MOURNING DOVE BROOD

On the afternoon of August 31, 1921, while walking through a small "jungle" of crab apple trees, gooseberry bushes, and other small growth, I found a Mourning Dove sitting on a nest containing two eggs. The nest was built in a broken off crab apple tree, about four feet from the ground. The eggs hatched about a week later, and the young probably left the nest safely, although I did not see them after they were large enough to fly. Is this a late date for the Mourning Dove to be nesting in east central Iowa?

FRED J. PIERCE.

Winthrop, Iowa.

### STAIN FOR BIRD HOUSES

A satisfactory stain for bird houses can be easily made from walnut hulls. The outside covering of a walnut, when rotted slightly, furnishes a good strong color. Rub it over the surface of the bird house and it produces a dull brown color which blends nicely with its surroundings and is pleasing to the eye of a bird. The stain will last several seasons, when it can be renewed. The stain, where walnuts are available, is especially desirable for the small types of bird houses, such as those for Wrens, Bluebirds, etc.

FRED J. PIERCE.

Winthrop, Iowa.

### A CROW THAT NEARLY "LOOPED THE LOOP"

Not long ago I noticed a Crow flying overhead carrying an article in his feet that looked like a mouse or something of the sort. This Crow wanted to transfer the morsel to his bill, and in trying to do so bent his head underneath him so far that he lost his balance and barely escaped overturning in the air. This must have surprised him considerably, but he was a determined Crow and shortly tried it again, with no better success. He was continuing his vain efforts when lost to view, but as his unsteady flight had brought him very near the ground, he doubtless alighted, where his object was accomplished with much less danger to his equilibration.

FRED J. PIERCE.

Winthrop, Iowa, Nov. 6, 1921.

### ODD NESTING SITE OF PHOEBE

(*Sayornis phoebe*)

Perusal of one of my old note books brings to my attention a phoebe's nest constructed in the air-shaft of a coal mine near my home

in Des Moines, Iowa. The shaft had been abandoned and the top was on a level with the surface of the ground. A wire fence was rudely set up around the opening to keep stray cattle from falling in. The phoebes had chosen this site for their nest, which was fastened onto the side of the perpendicular walls seven feet below the surface of the ground. At the time of discovery, which was on May 12, 1914, the nest contained five eggs. I proceeded to collect these for my collection by using a long stick with a piece of copper wire attached to one end and bent into a loop for scooping up the eggs. Leaning over a cavity probably a couple hundred feet deep and about five feet square it was impossible to maintain sufficient equilibrium to bring all of the eggs up to the surface.

The question, however, which came to my mind was this: If the young birds should have hatched could they possibly have escaped from a birthplace so dangerously situated. Aside from the nest no projection offered itself as a stepping stone to the outside world. It would seem to be an impossible feat for young birds never before out of the nest to fly upwards for seven feet, especially to a species that under ordinary circumstances has the opportunity of a more easy downward flight at the time of their initial attempt. It seems quite doubtful also as to whether the young birds could cover the seven feet by climbing straight upwards clinging to the planks, twelve inches wide, which were snugly fitted together. Some birds might be provided by nature to escape from a similar opening, such possibly as the chimney swift, but I feel doubtful if the young phoebes would have been capable of the task.

At least I felt that the parents would be increasing their number more rapidly by immediately starting a new home in a more choice location than by spending the next few weeks in hatching out and raising the young to fall into the dark depths of the mine.

EMERSON A. STONER.

#### A BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER'S NEST

On April 23, 1921, near Ballard Normal School, Macon, Ga., an uncompleted Blue-gray Gnatcatcher's nest was discovered in a young elm tree. The nest was twelve feet or a little over from the ground, on one of the two main forks of the tree, and partly supported by a twig. It was deep, the outside covered with lichens, and to a casual glance appeared to be merely a large tuft of lichens. The tree grew beside a fence that ran along a lane, through which some hundred and fifty children passed to and from school each day, in addition to the numerous adults who also used the lane. Back from the fence a rather open, wooded area of pine mingled with several species of deciduous trees and a sparse undergrowth, largely species of *Cratægus*, sloped down to a small stream. A line of pines ran along the opposite side of the lane, and beyond this an open rocky field.

During the following week the nest was completed. By May 16, possibly earlier, the four young birds were hatched. Both parents assisted in feeding. Neither approached the nest directly, but always alighted first in some other part of the tree. The birds did not appear disturbed by the presence of several observers near the tree, so long as they were comparatively quiet.